

REMARKS

The Office Action dated December 23, 2004 has been received and carefully studied.

The Examiner rejects claim 4 under 35 U.S.C. §112, first paragraph, as failing to comply with the written description requirement. The Examiner states that the language of claim 4 is not drawn to the embodiment of Figures 4, 4a and 4b since the spherical member shown does not engage the manifold in any manner as required by claim 4. The Examiner concludes that the language must be directed toward the embodiment of Figures 8, 8a and 8b, but states that the original disclosure does not support any presence of a valve in these sphere connections.

The rejection is respectfully traversed.

The disclosure clearly discloses embodiments where the filter unit 12 has at least one valve. Such embodiments are shown in Figure 4, for example, and discussed in detail in the specification, also with reference to Figures 2, 2a and 3. The embodiments of Figures 8, 8a and 8b show a filter unit 12 with spherical fittings. That the valve in the fittings is not illustrated in these figures does not properly lead to the conclusion that such an embodiment has not been enabled. It is certainly apparent from the entire disclosure that such valve is present in the fitting. One skilled in the art would know that the spherical units on filter unit 12 include valves.

The Examiner rejects claims 1-3 and 5 under 35 U.S.C. §102(b)

as being anticipated by any one of Sann, U.S. Patent No. 5,560,824, Boyd, U.S. Patent No. 3,388,801, Abos, U.S. Patent No. 3,595,397, Knuth, U.S. Patent No. 3,399,776 or Tomita, et al., U.S. Patent No. 5,256,285.

By the accompanying amendment, claim 1 has been amended to recite that either the inlet or the outlet of the separation unit is engageable with a respective one of the first portion of the manifold having a fluid path for communication with the separation unit through the inlet, or the second portion of the manifold having a fluid path for communication with the separation unit through the outlet, by a single pivot motion after the other of the inlet or the outlet is engaged with a respective one of the first portion or the second portion of the manifold. Support for the amendment can be found in the paragraph bridging pages 12-13 and in Figure 8, 8a, 8b and 10 for example.

The assembly as now claimed requires that the inlet or outlet of the separation unit be engageable with the manifold by a single pivot motion once the other of the inlet or outlet has been engaged. As detailed in the specification, this allows for easy assembly and disassembly of the unit from the manifold, and conserves space.

The combination now recited in the claims is nowhere disclosed or suggested by the cited references. In particular, Sann '824 discloses a filter for attachment to a filter pot. A closure seals the connection from the filter to the pot as the

filter is removed from the pot. Since the filter is screwed into the pot, it does not have an inlet and outlet engageable with a manifold as recited in amended claim 1.

Boyd '801 discloses a detachable in-line filter that has spillage prevention valves to prevent fluid from leaking when the filter is removed from the line. It is also attached to a manifold with threaded fittings and does not have an inlet and outlet engageable with a manifold as recited in amended claim 1.

Abos '397 discloses a water-filter with a self-sealing disconnect mechanism. Check valves are automatically opened when the filter is installed, and are automatically closed when the filter is disconnected from the water system. It does not have an inlet and outlet engageable with a manifold as recited in amended claim 1.

Knuth '776 discloses a detachable snap-on filter for a hydraulic system. When the filter is removed from the system, valves are closed. The filter container connects to a valve body with a pair of couplers. An inlet and outlet engageable with a manifold as recited in amended claim 1 is not disclosed.

Tomita et al. '285 discloses a filter container having liquid inlet and outlet ports having shut-off valves that are closed upon removal of the unit from the base. An inlet and outlet engageable with a manifold as recited in amended claim 1 is not disclosed.

The Examiner rejects claim 4 under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as being unpatentable over Boyd '801 in view of either Dopyera, et al.,

U.S. Patent No. 4,381,871 or Drath, U.S. Patent No. 4,404,103. The secondary references are cited for their disclosure of a spherical swivel connector.

It is believed that claim 4 is allowable by virtue of its dependence.

Reconsideration and allowance are respectfully requested in view of the foregoing.

Respectfully submitted,

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